



**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF ARIZONA**

**TERRY GODDARD
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

August 25, 2005

URGENT SAFETY NOTICE TO ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) announced yesterday that used Zylon-containing body armor vests – *regardless of the manufacturer* – may not provide the intended level of ballistic protection. Results of studies conducted by the National Institute for Justice (NIJ) on 103 Zylon-containing used armor vests from across the United States revealed:

- 58 percent of the vests were penetrated by at least one round during a six-shot test series.
- Of the vests that passed penetration testing, 91 percent showed excessive “backface deformation,” an indicator of potential blunt trauma experienced by an officer wearing the armor.
- Only four of the 103 vests tested met all performance criteria under NIJ’s body armor standard for new body armor.
- Age and appearance of the used Zylon vests were not effective predictors of potential ballistic performance.

According to NIJ, “Although these results do not conclusively prove that all Zylon-containing body armor models have performance problems, the results clearly show that **used Zylon-containing body armor may not provide the intended level of ballistic resistance**. In addition, the results imply that a visual inspection of body armor and its ballistic panels does not indicate whether a particular piece of Zylon-containing body armor has maintained its ballistic performance.”

In conjunction with the above findings, the NIJ issued a special advisory notice. It states, “The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) hereby advises that it has identified [PBO or Zylon] as a material that **appears to create a risk of death or serious injury** as a result of degraded ballistic performance when used in body armor.”

The NIJ report follows action taken 19 months ago by the Arizona Attorney General’s Office. On Jan. 15, 2004, the Attorney General’s Office filed a consumer fraud lawsuit against Second Chance body Armor, arising out of Second Chance’s advertisement and sale of bullet-resistant vests made with Zylon. While Second Chance has filed for bankruptcy and no longer manufacturers Zylon vests, numerous other body armor manufacturers continue to use Zylon fiber in their products.

“The NIJ results confirm what’s in our lawsuit,” Attorney General Terry Goddard said. “They are consistent with previous field-testing and with Second Chance’s own documents relating to the degradation of the Zylon fiber.”

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE STRONGLY URGES ALL STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO REVIEW THE NIJ REPORT AND TAKE WHATEVER ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THEIR OFFICERS ARE WEARING EFFECTIVE BODY ARMOR, INCLUDING, IF NECESSARY, THE REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING VESTS CONTAINING ZYLON.

A complete copy of the NIJ’s Report will be posted on the Attorney General’s website, www.azag.gov.